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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 002394

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER, TEITELBAUM
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [Z1](#)

SUBJECT: CALLS TO SEVER TIES NOT CREDIBLE

Classified By: Political Officer Kimberly Jemison for reasons 1.5 b/d.

Summary: (C) A comment in Tuesday's Herald newspaper calls for Zimbabwe to sever ties with Britain and Australia. Such a radical step is highly unlikely and British and EU diplomats, while admitting that their governments are formulating contingency plans, aren't overly concerned with the rhetoric of the day, claiming Zimbabwe has too much to lose. End summary.

12. (U) A front page editorial in Tuesday's Herald newspaper encourages the Government of Zimbabwe to sever ties with the U.K. and Australia beginning by withdrawing Zimbabwe diplomats from Britain and Australia and kicking British and Australian diplomats out of Zimbabwe. The comment cited little need to continue pretending there is a semblance of diplomacy with Britain or its Australian appendage until the real differences between the two countries are ironed out and until there is genuine respect for Zimbabwe's total independence.⁸ In taking such a hard line, the comment claims other African and Third World countries will celebrate Zimbabwe and use its example as a model to liberate their respective countries.

13. (C) Britain has not put much stock in the threats to sever ties, a British diplomat told PolOff. Nonetheless, the British are doing contingency planning. The implications of Zimbabwe's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, such as modifying (visa) programs reserved for Commonwealth members and the possible renaming of all High Commissions to Embassies, however, require more immediate attention.

14. (SBU) If the British High Commissioner were declared persona non grata and kicked out of the country, other EU ambassadors would probably leave as well, according to a Dutch diplomat. The diplomat believed there to be precedence for such a pullout. If the British High Commission were closed by the GOZ, the diplomat opined that the EU ambassadors would be called back to their home countries for consultations. Like the British diplomat, the Dutch diplomat did not think the GOZ would take such extreme measures because the consequences would be too great. In particular, aid from the EU countries would cease.

14. Comment: (C) After further reflection on the consequences, it is unlikely that the GOZ will do anything more than its withdrawal from the Commonwealth. Severing diplomatic ties with Britain would result in a significant reduction in aid, including vitally needed humanitarian aid, that would be compounded by the other EU countries likely reaction to Britain's expulsion that would further impoverish Zimbabwe. End Comment.

SULLIVAN